

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
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Turner

The El Salvador situation has been played out of proportion by the Reagan administration, a former director of the Central Intelligence Agency said Wednesday.

Stansfield Turner, head of the CIA during the Carter administration, said he did not believe the problem was vital enough to the United States to warrant intervention with military force."

"The situation will probably get worse before it gets better. The country may go Marxist or partially Marxist," he said in a speech at Texas A&M University.

Turner said efforts should be concentrated on buttressing countries in the region that are "potential dominoes."

Addressing other strategic issues, Turner said the proliferation of Cruise missiles would reduce the use of nuclear weapons while the deployment of MX missiles would create a dangerously "nervous" situation in the United States and in the Soviet Union.

Cruise missiles would be a much safer weapon from the standpoints of both countries, he said.

The size and permanent location of the MX would make the U.S. constantly nervous that they would be attacked by the Soviet Union, while their speed and ability to wage a surprise attack would place the Soviets under the same tension, he said.

"If we're both living with our finger on a hair trigger that's a very dangerous situation," Turner said.

Turner said that it is hard to determine how many Cruise missiles are held by a country which limits the possibilities of a nuclear freeze. However, a large number of Cruise missiles are safer than a smaller number of MX missiles.

"Instead of nuclear freeze we should be willing to move on to the Cruise missile," he said. "We should not put arms reduction at top priority. We want arms control. I believe the proliferation of Cruise missiles will reduce the use of nuclear weapons."